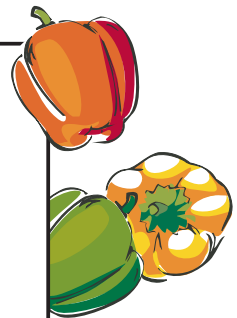


North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Food & Drug Protection Division



Monthly Food Safety Tips

- ⦿ Avoid storing foods in the temperature danger zone where harmful bacteria multiply: The "danger zone" is temperatures between 40 °F and 140 ° F.
- ⦿ Never thaw frozen foods at room temperature. Food can be safely thawed in the refrigerator or outside the refrigerator by immersing in cold water that is changed every two hours.
- ⦿ Sanitizer for the kitchen can be made by mixing 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach to 1 quart of water.
- ⦿ The four basic rules for fighting bacteria – CLEAN, SEPARATE, COOK AND CLEAN.
- ⦿ Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood and their juices away from foods that are ready to eat to prevent cross contamination.
- ⦿ When reheating food, leftovers should be heated to 165°F. Bring sauces, soups and gravies to a boil.
- ⦿ Harmful bacteria in food products can double every 20 minutes at room temperature.
- ⦿ Raw fruits are safe at room temperature, but after ripening they may mold and rot quickly. Store ripe fruit in the refrigerator or prepare and freeze to maintain quality.
- ⦿ Even if you plan to peel produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first to remove bacteria that may be present.
- ⦿ The "Best-If-Used-By" date is the last date recommended for peak quality and is determined by the manufacturer of the product.



The Food & Drug Protection Division conducts routine inspections of grocery stores, food manufacturers, and warehouses to ensure a safe food supply for the citizens of North Carolina.

For more food safety information, please visit www.ncfoodsafety.com

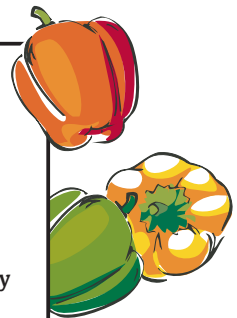
Steve Troxler, Commissioner

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Monthly Food Safety Tips

- ⦿ Always wash your hands with warm soap and water for 20 seconds before preparing or consuming food.
- ⦿ If flood waters have covered a garden, most produce will be unsafe to eat.
- ⦿ Children, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems should only drink juice that has been pasteurized or otherwise treated to kill harmful bacteria.
- ⦿ Refrigerated foods should be stored at 40° F or less.
- ⦿ Store leftovers in shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.
- ⦿ Use a food thermometer to make sure foods have been properly cooked to a safe internal temperature.
- ⦿ It is difficult to determine if food is unsafe because you can not see, smell or taste the bacteria it may contain.
- ⦿ Any bacteria on the outside of fruits can be transferred to the inside when the fruit is cut or peeled.
- ⦿ Wash lids of canned foods before opening to keep dirt from getting into the food.
- ⦿ Avoid putting cooked meat on an unwashed plate or platter that has held raw meat.



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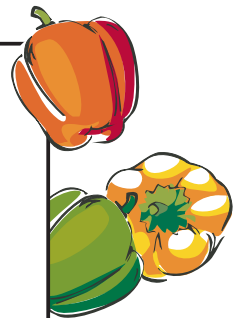
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Monthly Food Safety Tips

- ⦿ Never use products in a swollen or severely dented can because harmful bacteria may be present.
- ⦿ Frozen foods should be stored at 0° F or less.
- ⦿ Always check the labels on packaged food items to determine how the contents should be stored.
- ⦿ Do not store foods near household cleaners or chemicals.
- ⦿ A person may become sick with a foodborne illness as soon as 20 minutes after consumption of the food or as long as 6 weeks depending on the type of bacteria that is present.
- ⦿ During an emergency keep the refrigerator and freezer closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator can keep food safe for 4 hours and a freezer for up to 24 hours.
- ⦿ Marinate foods in the refrigerator, not at room temperature. If a sauce is needed for the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade before adding the raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- ⦿ Use smooth cutting boards without cracks or crevices that can harbor bacteria.
- ⦿ Consumption of raw oysters and raw eggs should be avoided due to the risk of contracting a foodborne illness.
- ⦿ If you suspect refrigerated foods have been stored above 40° F for over 2 hours, discard. **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**



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